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U.S. Engagement in the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons Debate

Center on Contemporary Conflict

Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School

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RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

The Project on Advanced Systems and Concepts for Countering WMD (PASCC) is run at the Center on Contemporary Studies (CCC) and sponsored by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). PASCC awards and supports strategic studies and dialogues that anticipate and try to reduce the threat of WMD capabilities.



The CCC has a respected track record for providing research and timely analysis on a variety of topics to leading decision makers in the U.S. national security community. Located in the Naval Postgraduate School, the CCC is the research wing of the Department of National Security Affairs.

Research in Progress describes ongoing PASCC research. For more information, please contact pascc@nps.edu.

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U.S. Engagement in the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons Debate

Performer: Stanford University

Project Lead: Scott Sagan

Project Cost: \$179,539

FY16–17

Objective:

This research project seeks to encourage more extensive public understanding of and more effective U.S. engagement in debates about the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. There is a vibrant international debate about whether the use of a nuclear weapon could ever be legal under international humanitarian law as well as how to mitigate the environmental effects of nuclear weapons production and use. However, the U.S. public is largely unaware of this international debate. Thus, this project will investigate the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons in order to improve the engagement and interactions of the U.S. public and the government with international organizations and movements concerned with the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Approach:

This project will commission a set of papers addressing key understudied questions regarding the humanitarian consequences of the production and/or use of nuclear weapons. The papers' authors will research and analyze the linkages among the laws of armed conflict, nuclear postures by current nuclear weapons states, public opinion in the U.S. regarding nuclear weapons use, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons into the hands of current non-nuclear states. Several workshops and meetings will be held to discuss and refine research findings, and authors will be encouraged to publish their papers in leading journals or newspapers.

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